

Hostility to Independent Thought.

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might not be convincing; it was at any rate an argument. That is, however, all that can be said for it from our point of view. It certainly did not lead to the real culture, the true progress of the intellect. Such an argument applied to nature as well as philosophy might keep men in submission to the Church; it would never have germinated modern science or modern civilisation.

This was, however, the argument that held sway throughout the dreary period of scholasticism. Men like Abelard in the first half of the twelfth century were persecuted by Bernard of Clairvaux and other champions of the authoritative Church, as dangerous revolutionaries, for daring to question it. Abelard's pupil, Arnold of Brescia, was done to death for seeking to apply his master's critical spirit to the actual institutions of Church and State in Italy. Debate was welcomed as a buttress of the Church. What it achieved in this direction the arid tomes of the schoolmen bear witness. The moment it took an independent or semi-independent direction it was mercilessly suppressed, and till the fourteenth century the scholastic theology embodied in the works of Peter Lombard, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, had no rival to fear in any appreciable attempt to emancipate the reason. Mysticism might turn away from its arid disquisitions, but mysticism was not given to rational inquiry or dangerous self-assertion. The dreamer, within certain limits, was allowed to dream ; the rationalist was as terrible an enemy of established order as the modern anarchist. The subordination of the individual mind and conscience was an axiom of church and school. The order, the system, was the all in all of mediaeval thought and life.

In the fourteenth century came at length the reaction against the limitation, the subordination of the reason, of which scholasticism was the expression and the monument. The human spirit gradually awoke from the nightmare of theological authority, and began to breathe more freely. As always happens, the new life was born of the old. The ecclesiastical, the scholastic, gave place to the human, the rational, conception. From dry dialectics men turned to the classic authors with the intense interest and delight born of the consciousness of a new taste, a new capacity. Literature, art,